

to enter into 99-year commercial leases for economic development purposes.

Navajo Nation is the largest tribe in the United States. It's comprised of over 250,000 members and extends over 27,000 square miles of New Mexico, Arizona and Utah.

Today's Navajo Nation has worked to provide economic development opportunities and partnerships with individuals, small business owners, and large commercial establishments. With successful initiatives including the Diné Power Authority and the Navajo Agricultural Products Industry, the Nation has been at the forefront of economic development on tribal lands.

Today I am introducing legislation that I hope will enable the Nation to develop new projects and exercise their tribal sovereignty. This bill will authorize the Navajo Nation to enter into commercial leases of up to 99 years on their tribal lands. This simple revision of current law will level the playing field for the Nation by allowing it to enter into the same terms that commercial leases are typically offered.

It is my hope that the offering of 99-year leases will trigger additional economic growth on the Navajo Nation. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this necessary legislation.

URGING HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN KAZAKHSTAN

HON. WM. LACY CLAY

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to bring attention to growing concern of abuse and corruption in the former Soviet Republic country of Kazakhstan. The recent revolution in neighboring Kyrgyzstan and, earlier, the conflict behind Russia and Georgia heightens concern for the region . . . a region rich in oil and gas supplies and a region which serves as a gateway for the U.S. and NATO war effort in Afghanistan. However, ongoing allegations of corruption, human rights abuses, human trafficking, religious persecution and the lack of election reform, free media and free speech seriously affect its civil society.

The world's 10th largest energy-producing country, where a large number of U.S. corporations are doing business in an effort to meet our domestic energy needs, is not only an ally of the U.S. on non-proliferation treaties; it has provided the U.S. and NATO a gateway to Afghanistan. However, increasingly I see reports indicating that Kazakhstan's governmental system lacks the basic rights of democracy: elections are neither free nor fair; what political opposition exists is manipulated, physically and economically harassed and even sometimes assassinated. Few independent media outlets exist; wide-scale corruption which has begun to affect major U.S. companies doing business in Kazakhstan is rampant; respect for human rights, religious freedom, and freedom of speech or economic liberalization is non-existent.

The United States has sought a mutually beneficial relationship with Kazakhstan and provides aid to Kazakhstan in order to enhance economic growth, democracy, security, and civil society and to attend to humanitarian

needs. However, it is evident that the current U.S.-Kazakhstan relationship is compromised by Kazakhstan's record of human rights violations and lack of immediate and necessary reforms while chairing the OSCE. The U.S. Department of State has criticized President Nazarbayev's government for human rights violations. Its March 2009 report states: "The following human rights problems were reported: severe limits on citizens' rights to change their government; military hazing that led to deaths; detainee and prisoner torture and other abuse; unhealthy prison conditions; arbitrary arrest and detention; lack of an independent judiciary; restrictions on freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and association; pervasive corruption, especially in law enforcement and the judicial system; prohibitive political party registration requirements; restrictions on the activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); discrimination and violence against women; trafficking in persons; and societal discrimination."

The details in the report, as well as reports from observer groups, are haunting. Two notable external groups are Freedom House and the United States Department of State. The observer group, Freedom House, has labeled Kazakhstan as "not free" and according to its assessment, Kazakhstan has earned a 6 ranking in Political Liberties and a 5 in Civil Liberties on the Freedom House scale of 1 to 7, 7 being the worst ranking possible. Even the U.S. State Department ranks Kazakhstan as a Tier 2 Watch List, meaning that Kazakhstan is a cause for concern over human trafficking issues.

In amending the constitution to allow him unlimited reign in 2007, President Nazarbayev joined a growing list of authoritarian leaders worldwide who have extended their terms indefinitely.

I applaud the work of the Helsinki Commission under the current leadership of Senator BEN CARDIN, and previously, Congressman ALCEE HASTINGS, for their ongoing commitment to bringing these matters to light and it is my hope that we continue work to bring about a transparent democracy where human rights violations and corruption have no place.

OUR UNCONSCIONABLE NATIONAL DEBT

HON. MIKE COFFMAN

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. COFFMAN of Colorado. Madam Speaker, today our national debt is \$13,471,094,170,316.20.

On January 6th, 2009, the start of the 111th Congress, the national debt was \$10,638,425,746,293.80.

This means the national debt has increased by \$2,832,668,424,022.40 so far this Congress.

This debt and its interest payments we are passing to our children and all future Americans.

CELEBRATING NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

HON. MAURICE D. HINCHEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. HINCHEY. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the Latino Democratic Committee of Orange County, as it celebrates National Hispanic Heritage Month. For almost a decade, the Latino Democratic Committee of Orange County has championed the cause of improving the lives of Latinos in Orange County through pride of ethnic origin, involvement in government, education and community issues while building coalitions. I am delighted to add my voice to those recognizing the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States and to celebrate Hispanic heritage and culture. I am proud to join the residents of Orange County in commemorating this celebratory month.

Since 1968, as Hispanic Heritage Week was approved by President Lyndon Johnson and expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988, we have all come together to celebrate and honor Hispanic Americans and their contributions to our Nation. Since the Revolutionary War, Hispanics have served with honor and distinction in every conflict. They serve as leaders in government, law, business, not-for-profits, social movements, and grassroots efforts. Hispanics continue to enrich our Nation's character and shape our common future. Now, more than ever, Hispanic Americans are shaping the American experience.

Madam Speaker, I am delighted to honor National Hispanic Heritage Month and the Latino Democratic Committee of Orange County. I congratulate and salute the board of directors and supporters of this organization for their very positive and lasting impact on the lives of so many individuals and families.

POLITICAL PRISONERS BEING HELD IN VIETNAM

HON. DANA ROHRABACHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, September 23, 2010

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Madam Speaker, the Vietnamese government is nothing but a gaggle of thugs and gangsters who exploit, control and profit from the labor of the Vietnamese people and the theft of that nation's natural resources. The Hanoi dictatorship regularly imprisons, tortures and executes Vietnamese citizens who challenge the government/mafia's rule. As in all countries ruled by a communist party religious believers are persecuted most severely because those who align themselves with a higher authority than the mob in the capitol are its greatest threat.

More than two years ago, I placed a list of the political prisoners then being held by the government of Vietnam in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. I am sorry to say that the list of political prisoners now being held in Vietnam has actually grown over the last twenty-four months. Vietnam has benefited immensely from growing US-Vietnam ties in the 15 years since relations were resumed, but the relationship has not in any way, shape, or form been